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February 26, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Kent Obee, CPAO, USIS Islamabad

FROM : USIA/Washington, P/DH - Saul S. Geffer,
Program Manager, Afghan Media Staff

SUBJECT : Afghan Media Project - Publicity/Atmospherics

REFERENCE : CPAO Memo to P/DH dated 2/12

Your transmittal of Dick Hoagland's memoranda is much appreciated. Allow me first to assure you that no copies of the memoranda were given to or seen by anyone outside our office. However, P/DH did discuss the gist of the contents with other Agency elements and with BU management in general terms. The areas of concern brought up were the issues of publicity and atmospherics and possible problems within the training team. It was left to BU to put its own house in order. BU project directors went back to their people to investigate matters from the viewpoint of a possible negative impact on BU itself in general and the project in particular. We have no knowledge of what was said between Boston University and its team member(s) in Peshawar, individually or collectively. We feel that both the positions of the Post and Dick, in particular, vis-a-vis BU were sufficiently protected and that the discussions we held here were placed solely in the context of concerns expressed by USIS Pakistan and USIA. With regard to future correspondence on the subject, it would be helpful if we were informed of memoranda or parts thereof which should not be included in the project file or which you feel should not be discussed with parties outside the Agency.

With regard to Dick's observation concerning Page 3, etc. of the BU video training material, B.U.'s project management has responded with the following, which I submit for your consideration:

- Read the curriculum in its entirety and particularly only as background material for the course..
- The training itself will certainly augment the course materials.

The present training program has strong emphasis on the practical application of principles as opposed to the theoretical.

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FYI, it has been reported that the students, particularly on the print media side, are complaining that they are being given too much homework, which is also part of the overall course work.

On Dick's memo of February 11, P/DH stressed both Washington's and Islamabad's concerns regarding B.U. contacts in the field with the media. Strong emphasis was again placed on possible significant negative ramifications in the GOP regarding interviews or other publicity, especially emanating from within Pakistan. BU project management has emphatically reiterated that it recognizes, and is appreciative of, our concerns. Also, it has taken stock of these concerns and has instructed BU trainers again on the subject.

Further, BU has restated its policy that it is not seeking project publicity. BU sees no merit in cutting off legitimate inquiry from the media without whetting the appetite of the journalistic community for even greater in-depth coverage. While interviews in some cases are permissible with discretion, visuals are prohibited (photography may place BU people and program participants in jeopardy). BU also points out that the continuing delay on the part of the GOP in resolving the AMS and director issues only heightens the danger to the project from the publicity standpoint. Obviously, the press has had an interest in the project from the beginning and this will continue into the unforeseeable future - the media cannot be ignored, we must deal with the issues with prudence and discretion.

Incidentally, I concur fully with your observations and impressions conveyed to Dick in your memorandum of February 11.

B.U. has reported back that there is no significant conflict within the training team; that/

B6

that there is no indication of any significant problems with the training program in Peshavar but, on the contrary, that things appear rather solid. BU also notes that as with any educational program, some students are stars and some do not make the grade. A general assessment of the students at this time indicates that many are making great progress, while a few are not.

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I trust the information provided herein is of value to both you and Dick and wish to emphasize that continued reporting on project publicity atmospherics in Peshawar etc. is most welcome. We will pass all information received to interested parties with continued discretion.

I also fully concur with you that some information is more appropriately handled by letter or memo rather than by cable, particularly in view of the wide circulation both in and out of the Agency that telegraphic traffic receives. Best regards.

P/DH:SSGeffer:jk

bcc: P/D - JMosher
NEA - EThornhill
P/G - RRoss
PL - JO'Connell

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